



**Council District Six  
City of San Diego**

**Councilmember Donna Frye's  
2009 State of Mission Valley**

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## 2009 State of Mission Valley

Mission Valley, which in many ways can be considered the heart of the City of San Diego, is undergoing profound changes. This past year ushered in the blueprints for major projects that will affect the future of Mission Valley and surrounding areas for generations to come.

Yet with all the ambitious plans on the horizon – and there are many – the Valley remains influenced and defined by three main factors that will continue to be my focus in 2009 and years to come:

Development, traffic and the San Diego River.

### Development

In a 7-1 vote in October, the City Council approved the Quarry Falls project, one of the largest mixed-use developments ever proposed in San Diego. A 230-acre mining quarry north of Friars Road is slated to be converted over the next 15 to 20 years into an “urban village” with 4,780 homes, apartments and condominiums; 900,000 square feet of retail stores and offices; a charter school; and 30 acres of grass, waterfalls and open space.

I cast the lone dissenting vote against the project despite my praise and respect for the developer, Sudberry Properties. Sudberry is promising to set new standards in energy-efficient construction and transportation-friendly designs. My main concerns were, and continue to be, the same as those voiced by many of my constituents in Mission Valley and surrounding areas – traffic volume and water supply.

For mitigation, Sudberry has agreed to build an on-site treatment plant to reclaim and recycle wastewater. The plant must be in operation by the time 3,311 residential units are built. The firm also has pledged \$50 million for improvements on Friars Road and surrounding streets, including a major overhaul of the state Route 163 ramps onto and off of Friars.

Quarry Falls is expected to generate at least \$60 million in Development Impact Fees for Mission Valley. I hope to use these funds -- and those from other projects -- to obtain park land and address Mission Valley’s other infrastructure needs, including an \$11 million permanent fire station.

In addition to Quarry Falls, more than 10 other significant projects are in various planning stages for Mission Valley.

- **Westfield Mission Valley Mall:** Westfield intends to double-deck the shopping center, doubling its size to 1 million square feet. Plans call for building parking garages and using existing parking-lot acreage for a high-rise office tower or hotel and a residential complex with 250 units.

- **Hazard Center:** The Oliver McMillan Co. proposes building two high rise towers with 473 residential units and overhauling the shopping center to add 4,900 square feet of new commercial space.
- **West End project:** Douglas Wilson Companies is planning 562 residential units and 12,242 square feet of commercial/retail space at what is now the Mission Valley Resort site on Hotel Circle South.
- **Eight other projects** are proposed that would add, in total, another 509 residential units, 699 hotel rooms and 137,310 square feet of commercial space.

Cumulatively, these figures show developers planning at least 6,574 more homes and apartments, 699 hotel rooms and 2,054,052 square feet of additional commercial space in Mission Valley. And those are just the projects already in the pipeline; there could – and probably will -- be more to come.

## **Traffic**

Traffic congestion will continue to be a growing challenge for residents, businesses and visitors in Mission Valley. Several intersections along Friars Road, Mission Center Road and Texas Street/Qualcomm Way are often severely clogged during weekday rush hours, and even more so during high-traffic events such as concerts or football games at Qualcomm Stadium or during the December holiday shopping season.

At full build-out, Quarry Falls alone is expected to generate an additional 52,000 vehicle trips a day on Friars Road and surrounding streets. The other projects in the pipeline for Mission Valley will add thousands more cumulatively.

My office will be working with Sudberry, other developers and the City's Traffic Engineering Department in the coming year to make sure Mission Valley's short- and long-term road-improvement needs are identified, prioritized and funded to the maximum extent possible.

Meanwhile, I will continue working with residents and community groups to improve traffic flow, road safety and parking needs throughout Mission Valley. Improvements completed in 2008 included:

- Installation of a red-light camera at Mission Center Road and Camino del Rio North.
- Installation of a "Do not block intersection" sign facing eastbound traffic on Camino de la Reina at Qualcomm Way.
- Installation of parking-restricted red curbs at 10210 San Diego Mission Road, on Fairmount Avenue north of Mission Gorge Road and at 5900 Rancho Mission Road.
- Removal of red curbs to allow parking at 8757, 8889 and 8952 Rio San Diego Drive.

## San Diego River

The San Diego River has been the lifeblood of San Diego since long before the City's inception, from the Kumeyaay Indians to the first Spanish settlers. I am proud to see this jewel beginning to get the serious attention it deserves from the City of San Diego, as well as state and regional agencies.

***San Diego River Conservancy,*** a state agency whose board I chair, has committed more than \$4 million to Mission Valley projects:

- \$2 million for the Ocean Beach - Hotel Circle bike path.
- A \$1.4 million project with the City of San Diego and California Coastal Conservancy to construct a bike path under state Route 163. It will link the existing segments of river path south of Fashion Valley mall and Hazard Center.
- A \$500,000 grant to the City to remove invasive plants at the Mission Valley Preserve.
- A \$190,000 project to remove invasive species and restore native plants along 14 acres of the river near Ward Road and Camino del Rio North.
- A \$150,000 grant to design a system of tributary canyon trails that will connect neighborhoods on the mesas north and south of Mission Valley to the San Diego River and to each other.

***San Diego River Park Master Plan:*** City planners, the San Diego River Coalition and other groups are collaboratively drafting a plan that will, for the first time, make the river the primary orientation for current and future residential and commercial development along its banks. The draft plan, which is in the early phase of environmental review, will create an integrated system of parks, trails and open space along the length of the river corridor, as well as improving the waterway's ecology and natural beauty.

***San Diego River Park Foundation:*** I am closely collaborating with the Foundation – and with the San Diego River Coalition it leads -- in its ongoing efforts to:

- Manage and promote the San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan;
- Monitor and sustain the river's health through its "Riverwatch" program;
- Organize volunteers to conduct river cleanups; and
- Host the annual "River Days" events.

***River bike path:*** After numerous delays, construction of a one-mile segment of bike path between Ocean Beach and Hotel Circle is well under way and is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2009.

***Sefton River Park:*** Plans are moving forward to develop in 2009 what will be Mission Valley's first public park at Sefton Field west of Hotel Circle Place on the river's southern bank. The \$1 million park, on a northeastern section of the 11-acre ballfield site, will include playground equipment, picnic tables and a small parking lot.

***Kinder Morgan tank farm:*** On December 10, 2008, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board fined Kinder Morgan Energy Partners \$222,000 for numerous findings of excessive pollutants in reclaimed water being discharged into Murphy Canyon Creek, a San Diego River tributary, between January 2006 and December 2008. The firm did not contest the fine, \$16,600 of which will be rescinded in February if a planned treatment system upgrade is installed and operating successfully.

## **Other accomplishments**

***Budget:*** This past November, after Election Day, Mayor Sanders announced a major budget deficit. His plan included closing numerous libraries, community service centers, park and rec centers and public restrooms in Mission Bay. I worked closely with the Mayor to avoid the closure of most of these City facilities and began discussing the possibility of combining the functions of the community service centers with our local branch libraries in order to cut costs, while still maintaining services to the community.

***Lead paint ordinance:*** On March 11, 2008, the City Council voted to support a new ordinance that will help prevent, identify and remedy lead hazards in housing before children are poisoned. This ordinance was the result of my formation of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Citizen's Advisory Committee, which forwarded recommendations to the Land Use and Housing Committee of the City Council. The ordinance requires use of lead-safe work practices to ensure that children are protected from the dangers of lead-based paint and dust. Call the Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program at (858) 694-7000 with any questions or to report a possible lead hazard. This includes pre-1979 buildings with cracking, peeling and chalking paint, and people unsafely disturbing paint on pre-1979 buildings. You can also contact the Environmental Health Coalition at: [www.environmentalhealth.org](http://www.environmentalhealth.org).

***Auditing inefficiencies in the City:*** As we have gone about reforming the way our City deals with how to audit itself, I have been able to ensure that the City looks inward to correct inefficiencies in our internal controls and auditing system. Making sure our City Auditor is free from management interference, that the City Council Audit Committee is free from management influence, and that our City Auditor has a sufficient number of employees are all crucial aspects of having auditor independence. I will continue to be vigilant about this by working cooperatively with the City Auditor and the City's Audit Committee, as I believe it is a vital function that can help guarantee the fiscal health of our City in future years.

***Amendments to the City's emergency water regulations:*** On July 28, 2008, the Mayor and City Council declared that San Diego is in a Stage 1 Water Emergency. San Diegans are now officially requested to voluntarily save water. If the City goes to a Stage 2 Water Alert, there may be mandatory water conservation. In this Stage 1 Water Watch, San Diegans are asked to voluntarily reduce their indoor and outdoor usage. A complete list of the voluntary actions being requested are laid out in the Municipal Code regarding Emergency Water Regulations, which the City Council updated on November 10, 2008. These changes were made in order to improve the City's demand response program in the event of a water supply shortage. For more information check the Water Department's Web site at:  
[www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation/ordinance.shtml](http://www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation/ordinance.shtml).

***Flood Mitigation Plan:*** In 2006, the City of San Diego applied to the office of Emergency Services for a flood mitigation assistance planning grant. The City was awarded \$50,000 in grant funds and was provided a list of 23 properties within San Diego which were designated as "repetitive loss" properties by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The City then hosted workshops which provided an opportunity for residents to learn about the City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance programs, and to voice their concerns of potential flooding issues throughout the City. One of the community meetings was held in the Mission Valley Community, which has flooding issues due to its proximity to the San Diego River. The City completed its first flood mitigation plan and got approval from FEMA on June 17, 2008. Now that the plan has been approved by the City Council, the City will be eligible to receive additional grant funds from FEMA to implement the mitigation strategies proposed in the Flood Mitigation Plan.

***Bimonthly water and sewer billing:*** On March 1, 2008, the City of San Diego Water and Metropolitan Wastewater Departments began the process of switching water/sewer/storm drain customers to a bimonthly billing cycle. This switch impacted all single-family domestic customers, and some multifamily, commercial and industrial customers. In 2003, the Water Department issued monthly bills, with every other bill based on an estimate of water usage. Now, the bill customers receive every two months is based on actual usage, not estimates as in the past. One constituent named Andy Manzi played a large role in calling this discrepancy to our attention. We very much appreciated his hard work and astute suggestions. Another benefit to bimonthly billing is the savings for the Water and Metropolitan Wastewater Departments (for printing and mailing) which are expected to exceed \$500,000 annually. For questions about your bills, call the Water Department at (619) 515-3500.

***Pension reform compromise:*** In 2008, I worked cooperatively with Mayor Sanders, Council President Peters and the City's unions to draft a pension plan for new City employees that will save the City money while still remaining competitive in attracting qualified employees to work for San Diego.

**Public Safety cost recovery:** After requesting from the City's public safety departments what we spend or make from providing police and fire services at special events, I found that in most cases the City does not receive full cost recovery for these services at events like Charger games, and Padres games. This is an issue I will continue to raise as we enter our next round of budget discussions, as I believe the taxpayers should not be footing the bill for the costs of things like professional sporting events.

**Mandatory Recycling Ordinance:** Until recently, San Diego was one of the only cities in the county that did not require mandatory recycling by residents and businesses. In 2005, I had made a motion that was supported by the full City Council to direct the former City Manager to provide an update on when the Mandatory Recycling program would be docketed for Council. Unfortunately, nothing was brought forward until 2007, when the City Attorney released a proposed ordinance to require mandatory recycling throughout the City, including condominium and apartment complexes, and businesses where recycling is often unavailable. I held a meeting of the Natural Resources and Culture Committee to review the proposal, which recommended that the ordinance move forward to the full City Council for approval. As of February 18, 2008, certain apartment and condominium complexes, businesses and special events in San Diego are required to provide recycling programs to their tenants, employees and participants. The Mandatory Recycling Ordinance aims to reduce the amount of waste entering local landfills in order to lengthen the life of the Miramar Landfill, meet California recycling mandates and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If you would like any additional information about recycling, please call the Environmental Services Department at (858) 694-7000.

**Council governance:** Over the past several months, I have reached out to many of you in the community to hear your ideas and suggestions as to how you think the City Council can be better run to serve you. After many community meetings and public hearings, I was able to draft a report on your recommendations. Some of the suggestions include:

- More evening meetings of the City Council
- More meetings in the communities- away from City Hall
- Requiring the Mayor to attend public meetings and listen to members of the public speak
- Expand access to the City Council Docket
- Enhance Council Oversight of Independent City Agencies (SEDC, CCDC)

I worked closely with Councilmember DeMaio and the rest of the City Council to bring these items forward for discussion. In December, the City Council voted to have a full discussion of these proposed reforms at the City Council's Rules Committee in early 2009. You can view a copy of the final report at:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/cd6/pdf/memorandum/081113.1.pdf>.

**General Plan:** A comprehensive update to the City of San Diego's General Plan was unanimously adopted by the City Council on March 10, 2008. The new General Plan sets out a long-range vision and comprehensive policy framework for how the City should plan for projected growth and development, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define San Diego over the next 20 to 30 years. The Planning Commission will be holding a hearing on the draft General Plan Action Plan in February 2009.

**Opposed pay raises:** I opposed pay raises to employees during the last round of budget hearings. The proposed raises, during these difficult economic times for the City, were not based on any new revenue source to offset the costs. I spoke out against such a practice, which unfortunately has been the way the City has done business in recent years.

**Council leadership selection process:** When the voters of San Diego elected four new Councilmembers into office last year, they were expecting new leadership on the City Council. However, only a few weeks before the December inauguration of the new Councilmembers, there was a push by outgoing Councilmembers to choose the leadership (Council President and President Pro-Tem) for the new City Council. I believed this would have blatantly ignored the wishes of thousands of voters across the City and was entirely inappropriate. I worked closely with new and returning Councilmembers to successfully put a stop to this effort.

**CCDC repayment to General Fund:** For years I have called for the Centre City Development Corporation, the entity responsible for redeveloping the downtown area, to begin repayment of the more than \$100 million in loans it owes the City. Beginning with this year's budget, CCDC will repay the City \$11.3 million and will begin contributing to the debt service on PETCO Park.

**SEDC investigation:** For months, I believed there was inappropriate behavior taking place at the South Eastern Development Corporation. After an investigation by the Voice of San Diego confirmed my suspicions, we found that the agency engaged in inappropriate land deals with developers, under the direction of an out-of-control president who gave herself raises with taxpayer dollars. I worked with the Mayor and other Councilmembers to take swift action. The SEDC board is now under new leadership and is in the process of reforming its business practices.

**Whistleblower hotline:** With the passage of Prop C and by working closely with the City's Audit Committee I was able to get the City's Whistleblower Hotline under the control of the City Auditor, instead of the Mayor's Office. Having the Mayor's Office run it was an inherent conflict of interest because all employees work for him, making the hotline useless and ineffective. Having the City Auditor control it will give employees a safer place to report instances of corruption, waste or inappropriate behavior when they see it in City departments. I will continue to work closely with the City Auditor to ensure the hotline is run effectively and independently.



## **Public Outreach**

My Office puts out a monthly newsletter, *Frye Lights*, in which you will find news and events from the communities that I represent. Staff distributes this newsletter at community meetings, and it is available in electronic format on our Web site, [www.sandiego.gov/cd6](http://www.sandiego.gov/cd6). You can also sign up on this Web site to automatically receive electronic copies of the newsletter, as well as other updates, in your e-mail.

My newsletter editor is also my Mission Valley representative, Chet Barfield. Please call or e-mail him at (619) 533-6465, [cbarfield@sandiego.gov](mailto:cbarfield@sandiego.gov), with any questions or concerns about anything involving Mission Valley, as well as any item or event you would like us to publicize or highlight in *Frye Lights*.

### *Community meetings:*

#### **Mission Valley Planning Group**

Mission Valley Branch Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway  
Noon, first Wednesday of each month

#### **Mission Valley Community Council**

Mission Valley Branch Library  
6:30 p.m., third Monday of odd-numbered months

#### **San Diego River Coalition**

Mission Valley Branch Library  
3 p.m., third Friday of each month

*Councilmember Frye chairs the City Council's Natural Resources & Culture Committee and serves on the Rules, Open Government and Intergovernmental Relations Committee. To view the Council's weekly agenda, visit <http://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil>.*

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